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ABSTRACT

"Speaking Across the Curriculum" (SAC) has become a catch-all label for a variety of programs aimed at teaching oral communication skills to a large body of students in settings other than the typical public speaking class. Such programs offer both threats and opportunities to the speech field. In many programs, faculty in other disciplines take responsibility for teaching aspects of oral communication within their own classrooms. Thus, students are exposed to aspects of oral communication, are not as afraid of it, discover the relevance to their own interest areas, and may seek out both introductory and advanced speech communication courses. SAC courses emphasize process as opposed to product; students learn the communication conventions of their fields; feedback is explicit and specific; students explore expectations for uses of evidence; and, perhaps most importantly, communication is regarded as a mode of learning. The benefits of SAC include increased credibility and visibility for the speech discipline, the pointing out of needed research, and the challenge to examine--in light of the shift of theoretical focus from products to process--the methods for teaching public speaking. Speech departments must be clear about the institutional support required for SAC programs, and must be firm about limits and boundaries, consistently reminding others that speech courses and SAC courses are very different entities and accomplish different--if related--objectives. (Twenty-one notes are included, and an appendix contains examples of SAC assignments used in an "Introduction to Shakespeare" class.) (SR)

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Speaking Across the Curriculum:

Threat, Opportunity or Both?

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Speaking Across the Curriculum:

Threat, Opportunity or Both?

When I was hired to shape and direct a "Speaking Across the Curriculum" program at Hamline University, I hadn't the foggiest notion what "Speaking Across the Curriculum" was.1 Hamline faculty and administration had crafted a curriculum which included an "oral intensive" component, but "fuzzy" best describes their idea. They said, "It's like Writing Across the Curriculum." I hadn't a clue what that was. I've found that most people who are not directly working on these programs don't know what "Speaking Across the Curriculum" is, including Speech Communication professionals. To make matters worse, "Speaking Across the Curriculum" has become a catch-all label for a variety of programs aimed at teaching oral communication skills to a large body of students in settings other than the typical Public Speaking class.2

Yet, despite different definitions and varying approaches, and despite the fact that often the administrators who propose Speaking Across the Curriculum often don't know what is involved, Speaking Across the Curriculum is here and the idea is spreading.

Speaking Across the Curriculum (SAC) programs have a lot to offer Speech Communication as a field, but we need to be careful about this new approach to speech education. We need to recognize both the threats and the opportunities that Speech Across the Curriculum bring to our field as we go forward with these programs.

I have two purposes in this paper. First, I will highlight important distinctions between Speech courses and Speaking Across the Curriculum courses that are taught by faculty in other disciplines. Second, I will argue that the benefits of Speaking Across the Curriculum outweigh the potential harm to our field if we carefully address those factors which are cause for concern.

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1 The author is the Director of Oral Communication at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. Hamline has a requirement that students complete two "Speaking Intensive" courses to graduate.

2 See Ellen A.Hay, "Communication Across the Curriculum," Speech Communication Association Convention, Boston, MA, November 1987.

Speech Across the Curriculum versus Speech Communication

It is not unusual for Speaking Across the Curriculum to be advanced by a college or university administrator. There are a variety of reasons offered for this sudden interest in oral communication competence, the recent national emphasis on communication generally not the least of those reasons. Yet we are suspicious--and rightly so. What is the real motivation behind an administrator's proferred idea? Typically, the idea is advanced by someone who doesn't know what Speaking Across the Curriculum is, much less what it takes to implement a curriculum including it. It is easy to doubt that the move toward SAC is motivated by a theoretically based belief in the importance of cross-disciplinary involvement in communication as a mode of learning. Many of us suspect that administrators are putting forward the idea because it seems to be a neat way to increase students' abilities in public speaking without hiring new Speech faculty. It must be a tempting idea: maintain one's existing faculty, get more out of them, and be able to advertise that the college or university is graduating students who can communicate effectively--out loud.

It would be a nightmare. In this scenario, the consequences of establishing an SAC program would be to gut the Speech Department budget, reduce Speech faculty, and firmly establish that the Speech discipline offers nothing more than advice about how to transmit real content (i.e., that of other disciplines). Anything but service courses would be suspect.

It may well be that some Administrators have this nightmare in mind. If so, our refusal to participate won't stop the thrust of these programs. At best, our refusal will result in having the service nature of our departments boosted by the demand that we teach cross-disciplinary skills. At worst, these programs will be instituted without us.

If SAC comes to our schools, we are the experts who should be shaping these programs. We know what is needed and what can realistically be accomplished. As long as we are asked, we have the opportunity to shape these programs into something that (1) will work, (2) will accomplish the objectives of those asking for them, and (3) will speak well for Speech Communication as a discipline. Far from being a threat, Speech Across the Curriculum may free us to show that our discipline and our departments are more than a collection of fanatical "Toastmasters."

Characteristics of SAC Courses

One of the most common concerns expressed by Speech-Communication professionals about "Speaking Across the Curriculum " is that non-speech faculty will be teaching what we teach.3 Many programs are structured so that faculty in other disiplines take the responsibility for teaching aspects of oral communication within their own classrooms. These courses are variously called "Speaking Intensive," "Oral Intensive" or a similar label. Faculty teaching these designated courses have attended a seminar or workshop to prepare them to design and implement the "Speaking Intensive" approach.4

The first problem related to this approach is obvious: if a one or two-week training course prepares others to be speech teachers, something we spent several years learning to become, then what claim do we have to any degree of special expertise? In fact, it would completely delegitimize our credentials as well as our field. But that isn't what happens because it quite simply is not possible. A two-week--or a two-month--faculty workshop cannot prepare faculty to do the same things that we do, but it can prepare them to do other things.

Nevertheless, in envisioning a Speaking Across the Curriculum program non-Speech faculty and administrators may think non-Speech people can do what we do because they don't know what we do. This points out the first advantage of an Speaking Across the Curriculum program: it focuses attention on what we actually do.

The kind of speech education that faculty in other disciplines accomplish in a Speaking Intensive course is remarkably different from that achieved in courses taught by Speech professionals. To illustrate my point, I will make an analogy to Physics.

Let's say that our school, "Ideal University", just decided that we need Physics Across the Curriculum. We all know that everyone needs to learn more about physics in all aspects of life. What we need are a series of "Physics Intensive courses" so students have repeated exposure to principles and applications of physics across a variety of situations.

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3 See, for example, C. Rex Mix, "But Can They Teach Speech," Speech Communication Association Convention, Boston, MA, November 1987.

4 May 1987. See also Charles Roberts, "Speaking and Listening Education Across the Curriculum," Improving Speaking and Listening Skills, ed. Rebecca B.Rubin (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983) 47-58. Thomas Steinfatt outlines a different approach where Speech faculty teach modules within the framework of other courses across the curriculum. See Thomas M. Steinfatt, "Communication Across the Curriculum," Communication Quarterly, 34 (1986): 460-470.

To help us teach about physics in our Speech courses, we would take a workshop. Let's say I decide Public Speaking should be Physics Intensive--a "PI" course. I could emphasize the physics of sound and light, or distortion in public discourse due to physics of electronic transmission. Maybe I also teach a graduate course in Historical-Descriptive research at "Ideal University." I might focus on the physics of aging in historical documents, carbon-dating of speech texts, restoration of film or video-tape. You, my colleague, teach broadcast courses, naturals for PI designation. You could discuss wave physics, or the physics of color transmission.

What you and I would teach would not even approach the level of content taught in an introductory physics course. Despite this lack of depth, there are numerous potential gains. If our students were exposed to aspects of physics in everyday life in two courses in their college career, they would learn something about physics, they might not be as afraid of it, and they might even find it interesting and relevant. Undoubtedly they would see applications they wouldn't have seen in "Introduction to Physics."

Chances are they would become more interested in Physics and may even sign up for "Intro. to Physics". Chances are they would get a lot more out of the course than they would have before taking their PI courses.

And of course, that's what many schools instituting SAC programs are experiencing.5 Students are learning about oral communication, they are not as afraid of it, they discover the relevance to their own interest areas, and they are seeking out both introductory and advanced Speech Communication courses. We are already experiencing these outcomes at Hamline.

Benefits to Students

Even in schools with a public speaking requirement, even in classes which have public speaking as a prerequisite, the assumption that students are equipped to perform is built upon weak foundations. Research on writing has shown that there is a deterioration of writing skills as students go through college, unless those students major in subjects that require writing throughout their four year career.6 Preliminary data indicates there may be a similar pattern with

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5 see Roberts 1983.

6 James Kinneavy, "Writing Across the Curriculum," ADE Bulletin 76 (1983): 15.

speaking.7 Anecdotal evidence supports a similar pattern for law school students regarding skills in interviewing, counseling, and oral advocacy.8 Even if they "get it" somewhere, students tend to lose their abilities to write and speak well unless given a chance to continue using and upgrading those abilities. With the SAC approach, classes other than Speech classes afford continuing opportunities for speaking; in addition, they *help* students develop their oral communication abilities.

The SAC approach benefits students in several ways. First, SAC courses emphasize process as opposed to product. Many faculty already require oral communication products, i.e., some type of in class performance. Class participation may be graded. Students may be required to present research papers or explain lab results. Students may be required to work on group projects. In courses designated as "Speaking Intensive" (SI), instructors not only assign such work, they give specific attention to *how* to do these things. Students are given help and provided with feedback specific to the end product, but in addition they are coached regarding their methods for producing that product. Oral communication ability is not taken for granted. Rather, faculty are actively working with students to enable them to publically speak, undertake interviews, work in groups, participate in learning discussions, ask the questions which will illuminate texts, speak up in class, or undertake any of a host of different oral communication activities (see Appendix for examples of a progressive approach to oral assignments in an SAC class).

In SAC courses, students are more likely to learn explicitly the communication conventions requisite in their fields--conventions which may be completely unknown to those of us teaching Public Speaking.9 SAC faculty are given a background in speech fundamentals *and* they are encouraged to clarify their own criteria for judging oral communication performance, criteria grounded in the assumptions of their respective disciplines. Faculty are already grading oral communication behaviors. SAC programs force them to identify their bases for assessment. What makes a "good" oral lab report? What does a student do differently when

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7 Rebecca B. Rubin and Elizabeth E. Graham, "Communication Correlates of College Stuccess: An Exploratory Investigation," Communication Education 37 (1988): 14-27.

8 John Bourhis and Charlene Berquist. "The Perception of Communication Skills in Legal Education," Western Speech Communication Association Convention, February 1987.

9 I am indebted to Alice Moorhead, Director of Writing, Hamline University, for her insights into communication conventions priveleged by different fields.

she gives a "good" oral explication of a "proof", as opposed to a student who does a "bad" (if correct) one? Faculty often have difficulty articulating their criteria for themselves, much less for their students.

Feedback is more likely to be explicit and specific in SAC classes; feedback is more likely to include content criteria as well as reactions to delivery. Faculty from other disciplines welcome our insight into ways to give feedback on content. For example, they often do not know how to identify organizational difficulties in a presentation, or to articulate why a particular organizational choice is inappropriate. Faculty know that assessments of effectiveness go beyond judgments of accuracy of content, but they have not been trained to identify the types of rhetorical dilemmas confounding a student. SAC faculty expose their intuitive knowledge and they begin to learn the fundamental criteria developed in the Speech-Communication discipline for effective communication. They are then able to openly discuss these elements as they influence the communication efforts of their students.

In SAC classes, students are more likely to explicitly explore expectations for uses of evidence. Forms of evidence vary in degree of appropriateness from field to field. Faculty find it truly enlightening to realize that students are entering their courses having learned (elsewhere) the appropriateness of forms of evidence clearly inappropriate for the present course. For example, in the Humanities we often prefer evidence showing knowledge of a long historical tradition. We train students to track down primary sources, to understand the foundations of theoretical approaches. Older citations are often viewed with favor. In the Social Sciences, the more recent the research, the better. We look for recent dates in bibliographies as evidence that the student is familiar with the most recent work. In addition, conventions for organization vary across disciplines. Some areas in the Humanities (and certain scientific enterprises) favor inductive approaches. Others will only accept deductive reasoning. Still others favor more circular approaches, or the establishment of frames, or provisional approaches. SAC faculty are asked to clarify the conventions of their fields. Often they were unaware such communication norms exist.

SAC programs force faculty to examine their expectations regarding "good" communication generally, whether formal or informal oral participation. What constitutes a "good" question in the context of discovery in their discipline? What characterizes a "good" answer? For example, faculty in the Natural Sciences are concerned with clear, unbiased descriptions of observations devoid of interpretation. One Chemistry professor complained to me that he was unable to get students to give a simple description of a hammer, much less a complex chemical phenomenon. "They always insert their interpretations. How do I get them to just tell me what they see?" Meanwhile, those in the Humanities

are concerned with interpretive analyses and moan over "simple" descriptions.

As professors we know these distinctions, but students often do not. They carry the expectations from one discipline and apply them in another without realizing the difference. Typically, because they conform to inappropriate conventions students receive lower grades without ever knowing why. Students negatively reinforced for applying the conventions they've previously learned are less likely to try again. By clarifying expectations and by being involved with the student at all stages of students' communication endeavors faculty in SAC courses expose the implicit conventions of their fields and enable students to expand their rhetorical repertoires.

One of the most important benefits of Speaking Across the Curriculum classes is fundamental: communication is regarded as a mode of learning. The opportunities provided for students to speak (whether class discussion, small group work, one-on-one, or public speaking) help students achieve behavioral objectives and they help students learn the content of the course. SAC courses help students learn by giving them the opportunity to orally articulate ideas, by helping them discover how their communication functions in context, and by giving them a chance to further their thinking through continued articulation.10 SAC courses are structured to provide more than one chance, being developed around the idea that thinking and talking are integrally related.

Opportunities for Speech-Communication as a Discipline

It is true that the trend toward SAC is not without danger to the Speech Communication discipline. At the same time, the potential benefits far outweigh the danger. I've already mentioned one advantage: the increased credibility of our discipline. Through SAC interactions, faculty in other disciplines find out what we do. Many of us have had the experience of a non-speech faculty member being completely surprised

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10 There has been a substantial amount of theoretical work supporting the contention that articulation of ideas contributes to the development of cognitive structures, hence learning. See James Britton, "Language and Intention," Prospect and Retrospect: Selected Essays of James Britton, Pt. II, ed. Gordon M. Pradl (Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook, 1982) 71-145. Also see Virginia P. O'Keefe, Affecting Critical Thinking through Speech, (Annandale, VA: SCA/ERIC, 1986). Modaff and Hopper argue that speech promotes learning, provides the foundations for cognitive structuring and triggers higher conceptualization. See John Modaff and Robert Hopper, "Why Speech is Basic," Communication Education 53 (1984): 37-42.

to discover we teach content in Public Speaking, even giving tests. Faculty find out that what we do isn't easy, that what we do is based on research, has an historical tradition, and is not merely a matter of teaching how to hold ones' hands.

But increasing our credibility is a minor issue compared to other possible benefits. SAC programs point out myriad areas of needed research. We need to find out if the SAC approach has an effect on communication competence. The assumption is that it does. We don't know if that assumption is true. We also need to find out if oral articulation of content enhances learning. Again, the assumption throughout the literature is that it does. Again, there is little evidence to confirm or deny that assumption. There is little evidence indicating what kinds of communication behaviors contribute to learning and what kinds of communication behaviors hinder it.

There is little research that examines the specific communication patterns that contribute to effective versus ineffective learning outcomes in learning group discussions. Books on learning group discussions offer prescriptive models based upon the work of John Dewey in 1910, based upon research on task groups, or based upon framevorks apparently created by the vriter.11 John Brilhart provides one of the best examinations of learning group discussions, emphasizing cooperative group interaction, the classifications of general questions, and prescriptive outlines of content questions.12 Yet Brilhart's discussion is not based upon research studying communication interactions related to learning outcomes. Rather, he extrapolates from research on the effects of cooperation versus competition on learning, from research on task groups, and from prescriptions for effective interpersonal communication. Brilhart's treatment is a good example of making the best of what we have, but his prescriptions are untested.13 Research needs to be done which examines specific communication patterns evident in effective versus ineffective learning discussions.

An additional opportunity is also a challenge: we need to examine our methods for teaching Public Speaking. The theoretical perspectives

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11 See William Fawcett Hill, Learning Through Discussion, 2nd ed., (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977) for an example of combining research on task groups with Hill's own formulation of communication needed in learning groups.

12 See John Brilhart, Effective Group Discussion, 5th ed. (Dubuque, IA: W.C. Brown, 1986) 323-338.

13 His introduction to one such prescriptive format is typical when he asserts that "This format has proven to be helpful in countless discussions."

which have dramatically changed the ways in which writing is taught have had virtually no impact on our teaching of public speaking.14 If Speech texts are a good measure, we tend to teach categories of speeches (e.g., informative, persuasive, entertainment, and epideictic) much as composition instructors taught categories of written discourse (expository, argument, description, and narration). The teaching of composition has shifted substantially from this preoccupation with product to a focus on process: how the writer writes. Composing formal oral products is similar to composing formal written work. We should examine our preoccupation with the speech product and reconsider the ways in which we attend to the process by which oral products are produced.

If Public Speaking classes are to do more than simply teach students how to present previously formed products, then we are also in the business of helping students formulate their thought. We should examine the ways in which we help them do so. We should consider ways of utilizing the expressive aspects of both oral and written communication before we move students into the more formal modes oral discourse.15 Perhaps we should be teaching our students to use expressive writing in the composing process in order to gain access to tacit knowledge, to find their own opinions and to develop their thinking.16 We should consider the role of pre-writing in facilitating discussions, which can in turn enable the process of thinking through an idea. The research in composition suggests that we should be encouraging speakers to discover their own idiosyncratic methods of composing.17 If speech is analagous to writing, we should encourage multiple methods and we should encourage

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14 Ironically, this work is based upon theories of verbal communication, especially those of Roman Jakobson and Dell Hymes.

15 See Britton for a discussion distinguishing between expressive, transactional and poetic aspects of the process of composition, where the transactional and poetic refer to the functions of a communication endeavor as well as being descriptions of the product.

16 See James Britton, et al, The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18), 1975, (London: Macmillan Education, 1979). Distributed in the U.S. by the National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, IL. In addition, we might explore the importance of story-telling to formal oral discourse. Ernest Bormann's work indicates the importance of story-telling for organizations generally, and it is likely we would find it so for public speaking both in development and in final form. Certainly the recent interest in the narrative form as a powerful rhetorical form would suggest that story-telling has a place in teaching public speaking.

17 Britton, et al, 1-49.

long-term incubation of ideas. We should explicitly take students through multiple revisions of their formal oral work.

Speaking Across the Curriculum programs bring further challenges to us. Our own rhetorical skills are put to the test as we attempt to adapt to the needs of our faculty audiences. By taking the SAC approach we are helping students and faculty discover and address the rhetorical exigencies of the disciplines in which they work. It is a challenge to our own rhetorical skills to make our discipline accessible and relevant in a variety of communication contexts.18

Dangers and Pitfalls

Lest I paint a completely rosy picture, I want to reiterate that there are dangers and pitfalls to the SAC approach to education in oral communication. The best way to deal with these is by recognizing and addressing them, not by avoiding them.

First, we don't know if our assumptions are valid. We don't know if students will achieve a higher level of communication competence via SAC classes. We don't know if students learn more. Preliminary data indicate we're on the right track. In surveys of students in SI courses at Hamline, over 95% of the students state that the SI approach helped the learn the subject matter in the course. This figure is consistent within a 2-3% range over the last three years. Over 90% believed their oral communication skills had improved, and over 90% believed the oral communication skills of other students improved. Despite the notorious reputation of self-report data for assessing one's own skills inaccurately, I think these figures are encouraging. Preliminary results from more systematic testing also show potentially interesting patterns. In 1987 we tested a random sample of outgoing seniors using

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18 Recent research calls into question our assumptions about effective public speaking techniques and strategies when compared to those factors identified by a lay audience as effective. See David Lapakko, Beliefs About 'Good' Public Speaking: A Study of Special Theories of Communication and the Degree to Which They Are Shared, PhD. Dissertation, University of MN, 1988. Johnson and Szczupakievicz have also documented discrepancies between what students say is useful and what is actually taught in public speaking. See John R. Johnson and Nancy Szczupakievicz, "The Public Speaking Course: Is It Preparing Students with Work Related Public Speaking Skills?" Communication Education 36 (1987): 131-137.

the CCAI.19 Some of these individuals had attended SI courses and some had not, since the SI requirement had been in effect only 1 year. Although sample sizes were very small (N=36), and significance levels weren't met, there was an intriguing, nagging result. Students having had Public Speaking were virtually no different on the CCAI from those who had not had Public Speaking (With Public Speaking $\bar{X}$=4.0395, without Public Speaking $\bar{X}$=3.9254, t-test=0.79, df=34, p<.44). On the other hand, while there was no *significant* difference between those who had had an SI course and those who had not, the difference was noticeable (With SI $\bar{X}$=4.0650, without SI $\bar{X}$=3.8726, t-test=1.45, df=34, p. <.16).20 Further research is obviously needed.

Second, we don't know if all students are benefitted. Reticent students may be at risk. Schools with SAC programs may be avoided by reticent students altogether. There is no research to indicate the ramifications of the SAC approach for this population.

Third, the potential that institutional support will not be forthcoming once a program is established is a very real threat. We must be firm and clear about the needed infusion of money and personnel to support a program which services not only the entire student body but an entire faculty as well. SAC faculty must be prepared to teach SAC courses with seminars or workshops. Ongoing follow-up work with faculty is essential. Resources are needed to provide it.

There must be support *from* the faculty and support *for* the faculty. Even if established, a program cannot be sustained if the faculty as a whole do not receive institutional support for their efforts. Departments also need support. SI courses need low enrollments. Departments may be confronted with a choice between capping enrollments or receiving adequate departmental funding, a decision often based upon enrollment figures. Institutions must be willing to rethink budget processes and criteria.

The illusion that speech can be taught by just anybody is one reason institutional support is denied. This is the nightmare vision where administrators think they can get something for nothing. In order to make sure this vision does not come true we need to be firm about

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19 The Communication Competence Assessment Instrument. For a description, see Rebecca B. Rubin, "The Validity of the Communication Competency Assessment Instrument," Communication Monographs 52 (June 1987) 173-185.

20 Public Speaking was *not* coded as SI. It is possible more competent students selected courses designated as SI, however the program was so new several courses were not identified as SI at the time of registration. Instructors reported little attrition in SI courses.

limits and boundaries. We must clearly articulate the complexities inherent in even the most basic oral communication endeavors. We must consistently, incessantly remind others that Speech courses and SAC courses are very different entities and accomplish different--if related--objectives. We must voice over and over the multiple contexts that are the province of Speech, and the depth of theoretical work that is part of our field.

There is the additional danger that SAC is merely a feature of a larger fad: heaven help us if Physics Across the Curriculum becomes a reality. SAC probably is a fad. There is a danger that "Speech" in general will be associated with fad-status and that the interest in Speech will be discarded when the Across-the-Curriculum ideas fade. I believe that focusing on oral articulation as a mode of learning places the skills into a context that will result in faculty development such that when SAC goes out of favor the ideas, methods of teaching, and the knowledge about Speech as a discipline will remain. Because oral communication is a means by which learning takes place, Speech has a place across the curriculum in a way that other disciplines do not.

Conclusion

Speaking Across the Curriculum emphasizes the need for talk in the classroom. There should be ungraded talk, appraised talk, and graded talk. If oral communication functions to help students learn, then these programs highlight the epistemological functions of language, recognizing that language shapes knowledge.

Learning is a rhetorical activity. A focus purely on skill development in SAC programs or in our own classrooms dismisses the importance of expressive talk in the process of learning--including learning how to use communication skills. If we believe competent speech is based upon knowledge of the kinds of communication appropriate to the context and the ability to put behaviors into practice, then we must value the talk which aides in the discovery of that knowledge. As experts in speech we need to be involved in helping shape *how* speech is taught and in doing research on the ways in which speech interacts with learning.

If oral communication is powerful, then speech ought to be taught in all types of classrooms, not just Speech courses. It ought to be taught at the post-secondary level where problems are complex and where the processes taught prepare students for problem exploration once they leave school.

In a recent speech, Ashley Montague made a distinction I think important. As he discussed education he made the point that traditionally in our institutions of higher learning we instruct, we do

not educate. He went on to say that education texts typically provide the wrong etymology of the word *education*, tracing it to the Latin word *educere* meaning "to lead" or "to draw out." Rather, he said, the correct etymology is the word *educare*, "to nourish, to cause to grow."21 Teaching students how to use speech in the learning process is a way of nourishing. It is a form of education based on a philosophy which says we are in the business of causing students to grow. *This* is the strength of Speaking Across the Curriculum: to facilitate learning, to enhance the structuring which enables learning, and to help students give their knowledge shape.

Can we turn away from an endeavor with such powerful consequence?

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21 Ashley Montague, "To Die Young as Late as Possible," Westminster Town Hall Forum, Minneapolis, MN, March 24, 1988.

Appendix

Example of Speaking Across the Curriculum Assignments
Hamline University, St. Paul, MN

Dr. George Vane: Introduction to Shakespeare

Vane uses both "Expressive" and "Focused" small group discussions, combined with expressive writing. He explains expressive discussions as beginning with freewriting responses to the text and then talking generally about problems of understanding that first the group and then the class as a whole can consider. Focused small group discussions are those which attend to specific detail in the text. Small groups work on separate issues and then report their discoveries to the class or lead class discussions on the questions identified.

Here are examples of focused group discussion assignments. In both assignments, the class is divided into four groups. Each group works on one of the questions early in the class period. Then group members lead discussions of specific scenes or specific characters with the class.

Through his questions, Vane accomplishes a number of things. First, he provides the focus for these specific discussions. Second, he provides task orientation for his groups to get them started. Third, he illustrates the kinds of questioning that will illuminate these kinds of texts. He is therefore teaching the *process* of questioning as well as expecting students to *do* the questioning. As the term progresses he is able to turn more and more of the development of questions over to his students because they have learned *how* to question.

Discussion Assignment: Romeo and Juliet

1. Assume you and several friends have been listening to the opening scene of Romeo and Juliet. You have been laughing during the early minutes, and that has disturbed your friends who contend this is a tragedy. Go over this early section and explain just why the early speeches and action are funny.

2. Another friend is simply confused about what is happening up through the Prince's speech. "There are too many characters to get anything straight," she contends. Untangle the confusion for your friend. To help her, explain how the scene begins to characterize Benvolio and Tybalt and introduces potential themes to be developed in future action.

3. Your friends have been awaiting the appearance of Romeo, but when he first comes on stage, they react negatively and their attitude doesn't change as they hear him in scenes 2 and 4. Are they reacting as Shakespeare would want them to? Just how is Shakespeare presenting Romeo in these scenes? What's your evidence for your response? We see Juliet only briefly in Scene 3, but from what others say about her and how she reacts, what should be our first impression of her?

4. Benvolio, Marcutio, and the Nurse are important secondary characters. We meet Benvolio in Scenes 1, 2, and 4; Mercutio in Scene 4, and the Nurse in Scene 3. How do their speeches characterize them? Note especially Mercutio Queen Mab speech and the Nurse's anecdote about young Juliet. In what ways are Mercutio and the Nurse alike?

Discussion Assignment: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Consider today the following questions which concerns the first three acts of A Midsummer Night's Dream. After you have as a group discussed your assigned questions, devise a statement that makes a substantive point about the topic (i.e., the moon, love, or friendship).

a) Be ready to read that statement to the rest of the class and to defend your assertion with evidence from the play.

b) Devise one question to pose to one of the other groups. Avoid a question that merely asks for information. Rather ask one that calls upon the group to explain or interpret some aspect of the play so far. The question can grow from your group discussion, especially if you cannot agree upon some point of interpretation.

c) If you complete your task early, follow the same procedure with another question.

1. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, the moon or moonlight are mentioned repeatedly. Check first these passages: Theseus and Hippolyta (p. 398).....[etc.] Is Shakespeare doing more than indicating the time of day? How might the references be thematically related to the plot?

2. We began to discuss last time the way in which each plot strand was concerned in some way with male/female relations. Review quickly which are established in the opening act.

   Trace next the various permutations of love among the young people. What might Shakespeare want to show about the nature of love through such actions? Compare also what some of the lovers say about love, of what causes one person to love another. [again, give citations].

3. The changes that occur among the lovers are complicated by the question of friendship. Each member of the quadrangle has, potentially, one love and two friends. Begin with the situation at the beginning of the play and work out the various alienation of friendships from that point on. Take note also of the nature of the friendship relations between two men and that between two women. The breaking of which friendship bond is more serious? Explain.